

Commuter Finds Community at UNH Manchester

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Chelsie Veilleux was looking for a niche when she came to UNH Manchester. What she ended up finding, however, was a home.

The 23-year-old, who lives in Deering, graduated from Salem High School in 2010 and started her college career at Keene State College that fall.

"I was commuting to Keene State from Salem," Veilleux said. "The [Keene State] campus isn't really geared towards commuters, so I didn't really make any friends or have a niche there at all. I just kind of went and came home."

Since graduating high school, Veilleux has worked full-time. Her commute was hard enough, but with classes meeting during the day three times a week for two hours at a time, balancing school and work was a challenge. After a year of commuting, Veilleux transferred to Framingham State University in Massachusetts with hopes that it would be a good fit. But her hope quickly faded – realizing it wasn't the place for her, she left after one semester.

Not willing to give up, she began her studies at UNH Manchester. Veilleux, an [English major](#), said she noticed something right away that set this experience apart from the previous two.

"Everyone at UNH Manchester is a commuter," Veilleux said. "So everyone is working and understands the struggle and makes more of an effort to be understanding in that regard."

She said the course schedule reflects just that, giving the flexibility people who work and/or commute desperately need.

"[At UNH Manchester] there is usually only one meeting per week for most classes, for three hours, and most of them are at night," Veilleux said. "That was a really great thing."

In addition to convenience, an easy to navigate campus and small class sizes, Veilleux said what she loves most about UNH Manchester is the dedicated professors and their genuine investment in the students' success.

"The professors are so personable," she said. "If you have questions or concerns or want to celebrate something that you've done, you can definitely go share that with them. It's such a genuine interaction."

Veilleux laughed as she recounted a perfect example of one of her professors going above and beyond.

"I'm writing this paper right now for an independent study on William Faulkner," she said. "Every time I have a new revelation about something I want to include in my paper, I share it with my professor and it's just enrapturing. Everyone is just so into it, it's great."

Veilleux is graduating this spring and plans to pursue her master's and Ph.D. in English, with the goal of becoming a professor herself.

"UNH Manchester offers not only such a dedicated staff, but also a really strong sense of community," she said. "Manchester sometimes gets a bad rap, but really it's beautiful. And being able to commute 30 minutes and have a job and a life, it's really great."

Written by Melanie Plenda

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